REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

These remarks are made in response to the Office Action of January 27, 2006 (Office Action). As this response is timely filed within the 3-month shortened statutory period, no fee is believed due.

Claims 1, 3, 6-12, and 15-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,421,672 to McAlister, *et al.* (hereafter McAllister). Claims 4-5 and 13-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) as being unpatentable over McAllister in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,256,630 to Gilai, *et al.* (hereinafter Gilai).

Applicants have amended independent Claims 1, 6, 10, and 15 to further emphasize certain aspects of Applicants' invention. As discussed herein, the claim amendments are fully supported throughout the Specification. (See, e.g., Specification, p. 2, lines 2-7; and p. 5, lines 5-9.) No new matter has been introduced by the claim amendments.

Applicants' Invention

It may be useful to reiterate certain aspects of Applicants' invention prior to addressing the cited references. One embodiment of the invention, typified by Claim 1, as amended, is a method of disambiguating database search results. The method can include retrieving multiple database entries responsive to a database search, wherein the database entries include a plurality of common data fields. The method additionally can include processing data items in the data fields of the retrieved database entries according to predetermined speech interface criteria. In particular, the processing step can include at least one processing task for determining whether a speech interface is configured to accurately render a pronunciation of data items within the common data fields.

The method further can include selecting at least one data field from among said plurality of common data fields suitable for uniquely identifying each retrieved database

entry, wherein the selection is based on the processing step. The method also can include presenting data items corresponding to the selected data field for each the retrieved database entry, wherein the speech interface is used in conjunction with a system in which the database search is performed. Moreover, the speech interface can provide an interface for searching information contained within a database and for audibly receiving results of the database search.

The Claims Define Over The Prior Art

As already noted independent Claims 1, 6, 10, and 15 were deemed to be anticipated by McAllister. McAllister is directed to a system and method for electronically searching a telephone directory utilizing "secondary information contained in subscriber listings." (See Abstract.) Applicants respectfully submit, however, that McAllister fails to expressly or inherently teach every feature recited in Claims 1, 6, 10, and 15, as amended.

McAllister, for example, fails to teach determining which of different data fields are suitable for distinguishing among same or similar data entries retrieved during a database search. Although McAllister provides for the "disambiguation of same or similar entries" in a database list by looking at data from different data fields, McAllister does not determine which data fields are more suitable for effecting such disambiguation. Specifically, McAllister does not perform any processing step that leads to a selection of particular data fields to be used for effecting disambiguation. McAllister indeed resolves ambiguous results based on data items contained in different data fields, but McAllister performs no processing that leads to a selection of one or more particular data fields to look to in resolving an ambiguity. No attempt is made by McAllister to select the data field or data fields more suitable than others, as recited in each of amended Claims 1, 6, 10, and 15.

It follows, accordingly, that McAllister does not expressly or inherently teach a processing step for determining whether a speech interface is configured to accurately render a pronunciation of data items within particular data fields, as further recited in each of the amended claims. McAllister relies on a data field that *contains* pronunciation data, but McAllister does not perform a processing step that determines whether data – pronunciation data or other types – in a particular data field can be rendered accurately by a speech interface, as explicitly recited in each of the amended independent claims.

In a portion cited at page 2 of the Office Action, McAllister describes the use of pronunciation data for disambiguating same or similar names retrieved in a database search:

> "To the extent the caller does not give certain name information, it might be considered secondary information to be used in later disambiguation processing to distinguish between listings, as necessary. Further, some of the name information may be alternate primary key information, i.e., nickname 38e. Thus, middle name 38c and suffix or title information 38d may be either primary or secondary information depending on its use.
>
> "In addition to the name field 32, secondary fields store other information about the listing which may be available to distinguish between and among others of the listings. The secondary information includes fields containing pronunciation rules for speaking the name of the listed party such as the phonetic equivalent for the name as spelled, or, alternatively, the pronunciation preferred by the particular listing as designated by the listing party and at his or her request. (Col. 7, line 46-63.) (Emphasis supplied.)

As this portion reveals, McAllister relies on "pronunciation rules" contained in a particular data field. But this has nothing to do with performing a processing step that determines whether the data in a particular data field can be accurately "pronounced" by a speech interface; that is, McAllister provides no processing step that determines whether a speech interface is configured to render an accurate pronunciation of data in a data field, as recited in amended Claims 1, 6, 10, and 15.

The distinction can be clearly seen in the example offered in Applicants' Specification:

> The search results further can be processed to determine whether the data items within the data fields accurately can be pronounced through a speech interface. . . . As shown in Figure 1, the data items within the "Phone" and "Dept. Number" data fields have been failed as possible disambiguation data fields because a determination has been made that one or more of the data items cannot be pronounced by the speech interface. In this case, these data fields include alphanumeric combinations rather than text words. Still, data fields can include text words which the speech interface is unable to pronounce. Such is the case, for example, if the text words are not included within a dictionary or include consonant-vowel combinations which are not specified in the speech interface. In any event, data fields including data items which cannot be pronounced can be excluded or failed as possible disambiguation fields. (Specification, p. 6, lines 11-24.) (Emphasis supplied.)

As described, Applicants' invention can fail a data field – that is, exclude from possible selection as a suitable data field for purposes of disambiguation – if the data contained in the field can not be accurately rendered, or "pronounced," by a speech

interface. It is noted that in Applicants' example neither of the data fields contains any data pertaining to pronunciation: one pertains to "Phone" data and the other to "Dept. Number" data. Even though neither contains any data comparable to McAllister's "pronunciation rules," Applicants invention nonetheless fails both as possible disambiguation data fields because each contains data, specifically, alphanumeric data, that can not be accurately pronounced by the speech interface.

Applicants' example vividly highlights two features not found in McAllister. The first feature is a processing step by which some data fields are determined to be suitable disambiguation fields and others are determined to be not suitable. McAllister nowhere hints at distinguishing between different data fields on the basis of suitability for disambiguation.

The second feature is a specific processing task whereby a determination is made as to whether an accurate pronunciation of data corresponding to specific data fields can be rendered by a speech interface. McAllister speaks to a data field whose data comprises pronunciation rules, but this is not at all similar to a processing step that determines whether data in a data field, regardless of whether the data is pronunciation data, can be accurately pronounced by a speech interface.

Accordingly, McAllister fails to expressly or inherently teach every feature recited in each of independent Claims 1, 6, 10, and 15, as amended. Applicants respectfully submit, therefore, that the claims define over the prior art. Applicants further respectfully submit that whereas the dependent claims each depend from one of the amended claims while reciting additional features, each of the dependent claims likewise defines over the prior art.

CONCLUSION

The Applicants believe that this application is now in full condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested. The Applicants request that the Examiner call the

undersigned if clarification is needed on any matter within this Amendment, or if the Examiner believes a telephone interview would expedite the prosecution of the subject application to completion.

Respectfully submitted,

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